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AN EPISTLE OF CAUTION

To all Friends Profeſſing the

Bleſſed Truth;

To Prevent

Injuſtice and Injury,

And the Reproach thereof in divers Matters herein Mentioned.

Rom. 13. 8. *Owe no Man any thing, but to love one another: For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law.*

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

AN EPISTLE OF Caution, &c.

Dear Friends,

IN the Love of the Pretious and Holy *Truth*, in a Conſcientious Concern for the Honour of God, and in a Chriſtian Care, that the *Ancient Repute*, that our Holy Religion hath obtained by the *Juſt Dealing*, *Upright Walking*, *Circumſpect* and *Inoffenſive Converſation* of thoſe that have not only profeſſed the Truth, but loved and obeyed it, and were Careful in their *Words*, *Habit*, *Living*, *Furniture*, *Commerce* and whole *Converſation*

ſation to preſerve the ſame, by anſwering in all thoſe things that Righteous and Holy *Principle* of *Truth*, and *Witneſs*, that God hath placed in the Conſciences of all Mankind, notwithſtanding the Scorn and great Sufferings they met withal.

But, to our great Grief, we have found, that ſome (eſpecially of late times) who make Profeſſion of the Worthy Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt amongſt us, have not had that due Regard thereunto, and the Honour thereof, as they ought, nor have been ſo Careful, as becomes them, in the Management of themſelves, and their *Affairs* and *Trade* in the World; but have *Inconſiderately* and *Unadviſedly* over-charged themſelves with *Debts*, 'till they could not duly and juſtly diſcharge them, and by Neglecting their *Affairs* and *Trade*,

Trade, and being too Extravagant in their *Habits*, *Furniture* of their *Houſes*, and *Living* too high, and above what their Income would anſwer, and what becometh their Profeſſion; and thereby have hurt themſelves.

And for want of a *Due* and *Timely Inſpection* into the *State* of their *Affairs*, or Stopping, when they have been ſenſible of their own *Inability*, have gone on, 'till they have been under ſuch Straights and Difficulties to ſatisfie their *Creditors* juſt Demand in due time, and that when they have come for Money, to put them off, have given them Expectations; and ſometimes (when preſſed hard upon) made *Promiſes* to *Pay* within ſome time Limited, and yet have not performed. And theſe things have been, and are attended with Evil Conſequences,

not only to the Perſons themſelves, but greatly Injurious to many others, and have been Occaſion of *Stumbling* and *Offence*, and have alſo brought *Diſhonour* to *Truth*, and a *Reproach* upon Us, and a *Scandal* upon our Holy Profeſſion and Religion.

Wherefore it is our tender *Counſel* and Chriſtian *Advice*, in the love of God, that all would truly weigh and duly Conſider theſe things, and Examine themſelves with the *Light* of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that each one may ſee, how things are with them; *For they that do well, love the Light, and bring their Deeds to it, that they may ſee, they are wrought in God*; but thoſe that do *Evil, hate the Light:* And it's thoſe, that with *Grief* we do declare unto you, that by walking contrary to what they profeſs, in not keeping under the Guidance of the good Spirit of

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the Lord, and not learning of, or being ſeaſoned with the Grace of God, they run into theſe things.

1. Therefore we Exhort and Counſel all to be Careful, not to launch out into *Trade*, beyond what they can honourably and punctually Anſwer, and without Injury to others.

2. That no one keep another out of their *Juſt Debt* to their Prejudice, beyond the *uſual Time* of *Payment*, be the Time what it will they agree to pay at, they ought to be exact to it.

3. That every Faithful and Honeſt *Friend*, that knows any Reputed *Friend*, or *Profeſſor* of the Truth among us *faulty* in any of theſe things afore-named, or any other thing unbecoming Truth, or our Chriſtian Profeſſion, that ſuch Friend, that knows thereof, in Brotherly Love and Tenderneſs

do privately ſpeak to him or her thereof, and *Counſel*, *Admoniſh* and *Reprove* the Perſon offending, as the Caſe requires; and if he or ſhe doth not hear and amend, then to take *One* or *Two* more, and ſpeak to him or her again; and if he or ſhe refuſes to hear them, that then ſuch *Friend* or *Friends* acquaint the *Monthly-Meeting*, where the Party belongs, or ſuch *Friends* thereof, that are appointed by the *Monthly-Meeting* to hear ſuch things in the *Intervals* of *Monthly-Meetings*, that they may ſpeedily call a *Meeting*; and the ſaid *Meeting* to do and adviſe, as in the Wiſdom of God they ſhall ſee the Caſe requires.

4. And we do *Adviſe* and *Counſel* all *Friends*, as they tender their own Good, the Honour of Truth, and Preſervation of our Holy Profeſſion without Blame, to *Inſpect their outward Affairs*, *at leaſt once*

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(or oftner) in a Year, that they may know, how the Caſe ſtands with them, and to order and manage themſelves accordingly. For by experience we have found, that a frequent examination of our ſelves, and Inſpection of things relating to our outward and inward States and Conditions, with the Light of Chriſt, hath proved greatly beneficial, as we have diligently waited upon God, and humbly made our *Supplication* to him in the Spirit of his Son. And we have obſerved, that it's thoſe, that have declined in their Love and Obedience to Chriſt, and the due Obſervation of his *Equal* and *Royal Law* (which ſaith, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, James 2. 8. And, *Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do to you, even ſo do ye to them*, Mat. 7. 12.) that have not proved Faithful in the unrighteous *Mam-*

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mon. And as Chriſt ſaid, *Luke* 16. 12. *If ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, who ſhall give you that which is your own?*

5. If therefore any upon Examination find themſelves in ſuch a *declining Condition*, that they can but barely pay their juſt *Debts*, or fully ſatisfie for the ſame; that ſuch immediately adviſe with *Two* or *Three* faithful *Friends* of the *Monthly-Meeting*, to which he or ſhe belongs, and make his or her Caſe known to them, and take their *Advice* therein.

6. And if any Perſon ſhall be ſo Unjuſt, as to perſiſt and go on, after he knows himſelf to be in a *declining Condition*, and afterwards *Break*, and cannot pay *Twenty Shillings* in the *Pound*, or fully ſatisfie his *Creditors*, he or they ſo wilfully and knowingly perſiſting, till their Circumſtances are ſuch as aforeſaid,

ſaid, ſuch Perſons for their perſiſting without the Conſent or Liberty of their *Creditors*, and contrary to the righteous and equal Principle of *Truth* in themſelves, and to our Chriſtian Advice; we cannot eſteem them *Friends* of *Truth*, or afford them any *Aſſiſtance*, as ſuch; but muſt be neceſſitated (if they do not repent thereof, and ſenſibly acknowledge their Fault) to *Teſtify* againſt them, as *Enemies* to *Truth*.

7. And for the Prevention of theſe things, and the ill Effects that follow (and that all that walk not according to Truth in their Converſations, may be viſited and admoniſhed) we hereby ſignify, that we have recommended to the ſeveral *Monthly-Meetings*, in the Love of Chriſt to watch over all their *Members*, in and belonging to their reſpective *Monthly-Meetings*; and

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to take Care, to appoint ſome faithful *Friends* in each *Meeting* to Viſit them, and to endeavour, that this our Brotherly *Advice* and Chriſtian *Care* for the Honour of God, his holy Name and precious Truth may be duly obſerved, and made effectual to the Good Ends propoſed; and that all may be Orderly in their whole Converſation, that ſo none among us may over-charge themſelves with *Debts*, nor *Trade* beyond their *Abilites*, but keep Clear from injuring others, or Adventuring or Hazzarding *others Eſtates* to *Sea*, or otherwiſe, when they have not *Eſtates* of *their own* to anſwer. And alſo that *Friends* be Careful to perform all their *Promiſes*, *Obligations* and *Contracts*, and make payment of Juſt *Debts*, and not tediouſly delay or keep back the *Hire* of *Labourers* and *Manufactures*, beyond the time appointed

appointed for Payment, and thereby give them Juſt Cauſe of *Complaint* of great *Injury* and *Oppreſſion*, Oh Conſider, what the Apoſtle *James* ſaith, *The Hire of the Labourers, which is kept back by Fraud, crieth, and the cries of them are entered into the Ears of the* LORD *of Sabath.* James 5. 4. *See alſo*, Levit. 19. 13. Deut. 24. 14.

And therefore, let all be Careful to Avoid ſuch things, and living above what their *Eſtates* will bear (by keeping *Horſes* and *Country-Houſes*, whereby great *Waſte* is made by *Loſs* of *Time*, and *Neglect* of *Buſineſs*.) For *Pride* (as the Wiſe-man ſaid) *goes before Deſtruction, and a haughty Spirit before the Fall:* And we have ſeen it fulfilled upon ſome, that have gone thereinto, and have for a time appeared as great, nay higher in their beginning, than many o-

thers

thers have done, when they have left off, who (by their Honeſt Endeavours) have gotten *Eſtates*: But ſuch have often ended with a *Stink* and *Reproach*.

And this hath happened, becauſe they have not walked in that *Humility* and *Fear* towards *God*; which all that would attain *True Riches*, *Honour* and *Life*, and be made partakers of his Bleſſing, muſt dwell in. And it is not only the *Duty*, but *Intereſt* of every one of us, that would do well here, and be happy hereafter, to Abide in the holy *Fear* of *God*, and walk according to his Righteous Law in all things; that thoſe *Reproaches* and *Scandals*, that have of late been brought in a great Degree upon the *Truth*, *Us*, and our holy *Profeſſion*, thereby may for the future be prevented.

And

And it's Adviſed, that Friends be Careful to obſerve the *Time* Agreed upon to *Meet* together for the Worſhip of God, as the *Quarterly-Meeting* hath recommended to us (held the 3*d* of the 11*th* Month, 1697.) which is as followeth.

"That Friends take Care to At-
"tend the *Firſt-days* and *Week-*
"*days-Meetings* at the Uſual times
"appointed, *viz.* About the 9*th*
"*hour* in the *Morning*, as near as
"they can, and in the *Winter-*
"*Seaſon* about the 2*d hour* in the
"*Afternoon*; and in the *Summer-*
"*time*, when the Days are long,
"about the 3*d hour* in the *After-*
"*noon*, on thoſe Days, which are
"not *Firſt-days*.

And as they are truly Diligent to anſwer that *Chriſtian Advice, not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together*; and when met, Reverently

verently and in *Fear and Humilit*
wait upon the Lord in the Gif
of his holy Spirit, all will be made
ſenſible of their *Inward States* and
Conditions; and as they are exerci-
ſed in a Chriſtian Travel of Spirit,
and ſupplicate God in the Spirit
of his Son, to help them and ſup-
ply their Wants, they may be en-
abled to walk in *Obedience* to *Truth*,
and be endued with the *Wiſdom*
thereof to order their Affairs with
Diſcretion; the Want whereof
hath been one great *Cauſe*, that
ſome have gone into thoſe things,
which we herein caution againſt.
For thoſe, that have neglected their
Chriſtian *Duty* of *Meeting* together
to Wait upon God, and Worſhip
and Serve him, have often not
well ſpent their Time, but miſ-
ſpent it.

So

So in the Love and Service of Truth (greatly desiring, all things herein advised may be duly observed and practised) we Remain

Your Friends and Brethren,

Francis Camfield,
William Chandler,
John Harwood,
William Ingram,
William Beech,
John Constantine.

Sign'd on behalf of the Friends and Brethren of the *Six-weeks Meeting* held in *London* the 29*th* of the 1*st* Month, 1698.

Poſtſcript.

AND *Dear Friends* and *Brethren*, that are *Heads* and *Maſters* of *Families*, we tenderly Exhort you, in true Brotherly Love, that ye may be Examples in all things in your Families, and faithfully and in good Conſcience diſcharge your Duty in the *Place* and *Station* you are in, as ſuch that know, you are Accountable unto God, and are deſirous to give up your Account with Joy, and not with Grief. Oh therefore wait upon God, and pray to him for Wiſdom, that ye may be endued therewith, and in the Fear of God, and Authority of his Powerful Truth diſcountenance and endea-

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vour to keep down in your Children and Servants that Spirit, which is not of God, and that would elevate their Minds above his Fear, and would draw them into the Love of the World, and the things thereof, which are not of God. For in the World is the *Luſt of the Eye, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and Pride of Life*, which *Youth* are too Inclinable to follow.

And *Friends*, do not ſpend any of that Subſtance God hath bleſſed you with, and made you Stewards of, to gratifie that in your Children or Servant, which ye have known the Judgments of God for in your ſelves; But you, that God hath given Children to, be Careful to Train them up in the Admonition of the Lord, and in the way, in which they ſhould go; that they may not depart from it, when they are old: Neither Coun-

tenance them in any thing, which is unbecoming the Plainneſs and Simplicity of that Precious and Holy Truth, God Almighty hath bleſſed us with the Knowledge of; and in which, as we live and abide, we enjoy Peace, and partake of Bleſſings from him.

And, *Dear Friends*, Let us ſtir up, encourage and give opportunity to our *Children* and *Servants*, to frequent our Publick *Meetings* for the Worſhip of God in due time, to wait upon the Lord, that they may know a growing in the Truth.

And all ye, that are *Servants*, and make Profeſſion of Truth with us, we Exhort and Intreat you in the Love of God, that ye demean your ſelves in your reſpective Places in all things, as becomes our Holy Profeſſion, and in that *Plainneſs* and *Humility*, which

which Truth leads into, both in your *Words* and *Apparel*; and exceed not the Bounds of Truth, nor let your Minds out after thoſe things, that do not profit to Godward: Neither let your Adorning be the outward Adorning, but that of a meek and quiet Spirit. And be Careful to diſcharge a good Conſcience towards God and Men in all things, and not be *Eye-Servants*, nor *Buſy-bodies*, nor *Tale-bearers*, nor *Tattlers*, nor *Back-biters*, and keep out of Strife and Contention, and *let your Words be few and ſavory*; and with Singleneſs of Heart, as unto the Lord, diſcharge your ſelves in your Service and Places. And as ye are Careful and Faithful in that which is anothers, ye will procure Love in others to you.

For when the righteous Principle of Light and Truth in all is anſwer'd,

ſwer'd, the Doctrine of Chriſt our Saviour in all things adorned, then the Peace and Bleſſing of God is enjoyed. And then there will be Encouragement for you, when ye become *Maſters* or *Heads* of *Families*, and Parents of Children, to perſevere in Faithfulneſs unto the Lord, and to be Careful to wait upon God, and pray to him, that ye may be preſerved in the Love and Obedience to Truth, and endued with Power and Wiſdom to diſcharge your reſpective Duties, and anſwer this our Chriſtian *Advice*, avoiding the things cautioned againſt, and following thoſe Exhorted unto; that ſo we may, as Children of one Father and Houſehold of Faith, grow up more and more unto a Habitation for God in and through his holy Spirit.

And

And all *Friends*, both High and Low, Rich and Poor, Young and Old, Live in *Love*, live in *Meekneſs*, live in *Humility*, live in *Chaſtity*, live in *Self-Denial*, live in the *Croſs* of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and in that ye will have Peace, in that ye will receive Strength to walk blameleſs in the Sight of God and Man.

THE END.

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